

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for multicasting a retrieval request message to more than one of a plurality of mobile agents, comprising the steps of:

receiving a packet comprising a retrieval request message and preferential destination information designated by a user;

determining to which of said plurality of mobile agents said message is to be sent, by referring to said preferential destination information; and

sending said message to more than one of said plurality of mobile agents determined as destinations for responding to said retrieval request.

2. (original) The method according to claim 1, wherein said determining step further comprises a step of: referring to messaging policy data defining priorities of agents to which said message can be sent.

3. (original) The method according to claim 2, wherein said messaging policy data is defined for each type of message.

4. (original) The method according to claim 2, wherein said messaging policy data defines the number of agents which receive the message for each type of message.

5. (original) The method according to claim 2, wherein said determining step further comprises a step of: using said priorities of agents defined in said messaging policy data and pairs of agent names and priorities included in said preferential destination information to determine destination agents from an agent having highest priority.

6. (original) The method according to claim 1, further comprising a step of: sending information concerning agents which are not determined as destination agents and said message to a representative agent which represents agents to which said message can be sent.

7. (original) The method according to claim 2, further comprising a step of: sending information concerning agents which are not determined as destination agents and said message to a representative agent which represents agents to which said message can be sent.

8. (original) The method according to claim 6, wherein said representative agent generates a response message for a source agent of a message, by referring to information from preregistered agents to which said message can be sent.

9. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein said representative agent generates a response message for a source agent of a message, by referring to information from preregistered agents to which said message can be sent.

10. (currently amended) A computer comprising:
an execution environment for a plurality of mobile agents;
and

a message monitor for receiving a packet, comprising a retrieval request message and preferential destination information designated by a user, from an agent being active in the execution environment for said mobile agents, and for determining to which of said plurality of mobile agents said message is to be sent by referring to said preferential destination information, and for multicasting said messages to more than one of said plurality of mobile agents determined as destination agents for responding to said retrieval request.

11. (original) The computer according to claim 10, further comprising: a storage device storing a messaging policy data defining priorities of agents to which said message can be sent.

12. (original) The computer according to claim 11, wherein said message monitor determines, by using said priorities of agents defined in said messaging policy data and pairs of agent names and priorities included in said preferential destination information, destination agents from an agent having highest priority.

13. (original) The computer according to claim 10, wherein said message monitor sends information concerning agents which are not determined as destination agents and said message to a representative agent which represents agents to which said message can be sent.

14. (original) The computer according to claim 11, wherein said message monitor sends information concerning agents which are not determined as destination agents and said message to a representative agent which represents agents to which said message can be sent.

15. (currently amended) A storage medium for storing a program executable by a machine for causing the machine to

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perform method steps for multicasting a retrieval request message to more than one of a plurality of mobile agents, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving a packet comprising a retrieval request message and preferential destination information designated by a user;

determining to which of said plurality of mobile agents said message is to be sent, by referring to said preferential destination information; and

sending said message to more than one of said plurality of mobile agents determined as destinations for responding to said retrieval request.

16. (original) The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein said determining step comprises a step of: referring to a messaging policy data defining priorities of agents to which said message can be sent.

17. (original) The storage medium according to claim 15, wherein said program further comprises a step of: sending information concerning agents which are not determined as destinations and said message to a representative agent which represents agents to which said message can be sent.

18. (original) The storage medium according to claim 16, wherein said program further comprises a step of: sending

information concerning agents which are not determined as destinations and said message to a representative agent which represents agents to which said message can be sent.

19. (currently amended) A method for multicasting a retrieval request message to more than one of a plurality of mobile agents, comprising the steps of:

receiving a retrieval request message;

determining to which of said plurality of mobile agents said message is to be sent, by referring to a messaging policy data defining priorities of mobile agents to which said message can be sent; and

sending said message to more than one of said plurality of mobile agents determined as destinations for responding to said retrieval request.

20. (currently amended) A storage medium for storing a program for causing a machine to execute the steps of a method for multicasting a retrieval request message to more than one of a plurality of mobile agents, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving a retrieval request message;

determining to which of said plurality of mobile agents said message is to be sent, by referring to a messaging policy data

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defining priorities of agents to which said message can be sent;
and

sending said retrieval request message to more than one of
said plurality of mobile agents determined as destinations for
responding to said retrieval request.
